



Packaging wet tissues

Case study: PFM story

Applications in packaging

- Picking
- Packing
- Palletizing
- Inspection/quality control

ABB products in this application

- IRB 340 FlexPicker
- PickMaster Software

PFM in Italy puts the lid on flexible film packaging problems.

PFM, the initials stand for Pietro Fioravanti Macchine, has been making packaging systems since 1964 from its home in Torrelvelicino (Vicenza), Italy, at a time when robots on an Italian production line were the stuff of dreams.

Italianapack, the company that was to become PFM, was created by Pietro Fioravanti for the production of horizontal flow-wrap packaging machines. That means PFM does not build machinery for paper packaging, but rather for flexible film packaging.

About 10 years ago, producers of “Pillow-Pack” type packages for moist baby wipes began asking PFM to put lids on these packages, so the wipes would be easier to extract and be protected so they wouldn’t dry out once the package was opened.

“We said ‘Impossible. It can’t be done,’” admits Paolo Fioravanti Managing Director PFM. Then he saw ABB’s FlexPicker at a trade show in 1998. The Vision system of the FlexPicker seemed to offer a way to apply glue to



FlexPicker picking plastic lids.

the lids without creating more problems than it solved. PFM started talking to ABB. Eventually several technicians from ABB came down from Sweden to offer support in Vicenza.

ABB introduces PickMaster

While the first year saw many kinks that needed to be ironed out, in 2001 ABB introduced a new generation of software for Vision – ABB’s PickMaster, designed specifically for use with handling consumer goods like jar lids – which solved the problems, says Daniel Gravini, customer support engineer for PFM.

That year PFM gave a prototype to an Italian client, and immediately sold three more to that same client. They have since sold more than 30 machines to customers in Korea, the U.S., Germany, and the Netherlands as well as Italy.

The line produces 70 packs a minute. Formerly these packs had to go through two additional processes for sorting and orienting and produced 50 packs a minute. Moreover, the equipment traditionally used was inflexible.



PFM cells work with everything from baby wipes to cookies.

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“We have seen that once it has been made for a lid shape it is very hard to change,” observes Gravini.

For example, applying glue could be a real challenge because of the problem of leakage in a product where hygiene is essential. But the FlexPicker and PickMaster provide the flexibility and accuracy that help eliminate these difficulties. And price is not a major consideration; payback comes in less than 18 months anyway. “Ease of use and positive results are what count for our clients,” says Fioravanti.

“To stay ahead of the game, we are always seeking new technology, proposing new efficiencies, faster equipment and a faster pace of change to our clients.”

Paolo Fioravanti, PFM

FACTS

Key benefits

The advantages for PFM's popular solution for handling the lids of baby wipe packages include:

- Lower cost
- Simplicity for the operator
- Less space
- More hygienic
- Reliability
- Payback less than 18 months
- Higher flexibility
- Increased output - from 50 to 70 packs/min

PFM FACTS

PFM

The PFM Group has been working in the packaging business for about 40 years. It has strengthened the presence in the industry thanks to its continuous research, the use of top level instrumentation and designers. PFM has a constant desire for improving and innovating its technology and knowledge of the industry.

For more information: www.pfm.it